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OLD ORDERISM.

BY DR. P. FAHRNEY.

The "ism" refers to doctrine, "order," to church government, and the word "old" would indicate that there is a new order of things in what is best known as the Dunkard church. It is not the Mormon *people*, but *Mormon-ism*, that attracts so much attention, just now; not the spiritualists but their *ism* that is obnoxious to the best and most thoughtful people of our day.

We are all more or less influenced by our surroundings, and in some instances may become the victims of delusions. We are to "try the spirits," and, it therefore follows, that we must have a standard by which to make the proper tests in the ordinary affairs of life. When we want to weigh or measure anything, we are supplied with standard weights and measures. We are not allowed by law to use the French or any foreign standard, but are restricted to that of the United States. But in religion there are many standards. The Mormons rely on the book of Mormon; the Turks and Egyptians on the Koran; the Spiritualists have their mediums, while the professed Christians also have their preferences. One declares that their religion is very old—older even than the Bible. They have a living man they depend upon; he, they claim is "infallable", but they did not seem to find it out until within the last score of years. There is another sect who are governed by the "inner light" and still others, by the "spirit within;" they can tell you how much the Lord has done for them, but they cannot say how much they have done in return.

There is another class who call themselves "Bible Christians," &c,, &c. It is not difficult then for earnest seekers after TRUTH to find what they were after: Truth is eternal, and in all ages of the world has the earnest seeker after facts been unpopular, and sometimes persecuted unto death. Is it truth or applause that we are wanting? If the former, we must get down to solid work. For truth is as precious as gold, and as hard to get. The man who by honesty and frugality, accumulates something, is by no means popular. By some he is considered miserly, and by others mean. The seeker after truth, whether in science, politics, or religion, is never praised very much; it is a thankless work.

Alex. Mack and his coadjutors were Bible Christians in the true sense. They beleived that true Christianity is not contagious, like Mormonism and Spiritualism, but is something that must be accomplished. They took the New Testament as their standard and read something like this: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me," this passage evidently had allusion to the Old Testament scriptures. "If ye love me ye will keep my commandments." His commandments are in the New Testament. "Happy are ye if ye keep my commandments." Some people seek happiness in other methods. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the widows and fatherless in their afflictions."

Looking up the old order with its 'ism, is the work of a truth-seeker. It does not render one popular, inasmuch as historians are always subjected to criticism, and they are always unearthing things that some people desired to have concealed. For instance, some of our people are extremely anxious to forget that the ancient brethren, Mack included, disbelieved in endless punishment. The distinctive features in the ism of those gone before, was literal obedience to the commandments in the New Testament. "But how about the spirits?" says one. Well, they had the "Sword of the Spirit" in the word of God and they handled that. But did they not pray for the spirit? Probably they did, but it was unnecessary, since *obedience* is all that is required by the New Testament, and the Lord's prayer is the only formal prayer that is given, and in that we ask for "our daily bread," &c. But don't they believe in a change of heart? and how do they get that? Answer: When a boy arms himself with a knife and revolver, and leaves father, mother brothers and sisters, to fight the Indians, it is evident that he has been reading a yellow-covered book that has given him a new spirit—a "change of heart;"—the same may be said of a rich man's daughter who runs away with the coachman. Is it not then reasonable that if a young, or even an old person, should apply himself closely to the reading of the Bible to the exclusion of almost anything else, that he will have a change of heart and a peace-loving disposition. If immersion, feet washing and the holy kiss, were non essential or superfluous then they had at least a precedent in the New Testament; and it shows how willing they were to *obey* everything they *believed* to be commanded. They believed in *personal holiness and individual effort*, and this was the gulf between them and most other denominations. But some things cannot be brought out in a public discussion, any more than you can describe or define that emotion of the heart known as *Love*. If your son is obedient and does your bidding you know that he has respect for your authority. The same is true of those who so willingly do all that is commanded. It is not cold formality and morality, but a "change of heart." Thus it was described to me in the days of my youth.

Now as to personal holiness, the popular belief is that you eannot be good unless you make, or help others to be good; that Christ was a reformer sent into the world to reform people,, and when his servants have the work finished, he will come again. This kind of teaching takes well, but "old orderism" stands aloof from it, and for this reason were the old brethren disliked, and right here is the gulf that separated them from Christendom, for they did not think that even preaching *reformed*. It did not reform the antidiluvians or the Sodomites. They believed in reforming themselves, and thus let their light shine by good works. For "faith without works is dead." As to combined effort or popular movements they never interfered with them outside of their own councils. They never begrudged the heathen the education they received at the hands of missionaries, nor did they belittle the efforts of temperance societies; but they objected when they were asked to accept these things as "pure and undefiled religion", nor as a substitute for Christianity. If one of their numbers wanted to start a Sunday school, and another wanted to go to Germany on a mission of love, as was the case, they did not object, but should any one bring it up in the council to load such things on the members, it would make trouble; because they wanted to work together as *individuals* and not as a harnessed *society*. They had no creed but the New Testament. Individual grains of wheat may be planted and reproduce their kind, but once they are crushed beneath millstones and combined their vitality has been destroyed. If the "old" German Baptists, as they wish to be known, adhere to these principles then they are entitled to the name "old orderists." And if they are faithful in all things as those who have gone before, then there can be no good reason to render them uncomfortable on account of their peculiar views, since there are some in other denominations, who are minded as they are.

Now as to the NEW order: It seems the breach beteewn the separated parties among our people, will soon be wide enough to enable seekers after truth to see the differences between the "yearly meeting" and "annual meeting" parties, and there should be no more bitterness towards the old German Baptist Brethren than towards the Amish.

In these days there is much said about accomplishments, &c. Few people are aware that our people in olden times had some rare accomplishments. A minister in Philadelphia, in the last century, had committed the Bible to memory, so it was said. Those whose religion is older than the Book of Books would have little use for such an accomplishment. The same is true of those who depend on the "inner light". The late Andrew Spanogle would read the Old Testament through once a year and the New twice a year. Our old and beloved friend and brother, D. M. Holsinger, father of H. R., blind as he is, can recite chapter after chapter in the Scriptures. Those Christians who are obliged to attend lodge meetings, church fairs, tea parties, and everything else connected with modern Christianity, cannot find much time to study the Bible.

Chicago, Oct. 20, 1884.

Give not ear to tale-bearers or babblers, nor be scurrilous in conversation.

SIFTINGS.

BY J. A. MILLER, D. D., M. D.,—CALIFORNIA.

"What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord."—Jer. 23: 28.

In No. 36, of the EVANGELIST, brother Roberts in reviewing brother Beer of this State, says, among other things, that "Christ came to atone for man's transgression, and to make known to man that there was a way of salvation and laid down the essentials, viz. Repentance, Faith, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and washing the Saint's feet, &c., &c." These five specified duties, and the "&c., &c." implies quite a number more. Then by way of emphasis he adds, "These were essential, are now, and ever will be essential to man's salvation." True, I can hardly hold the pen, hence, have waited for some one else to call attention to the error, but as no correction appears, I at least must enter my protest. For aught I know this may be the belief, and teaching of the Brethren church, I only know it is not mine, and never can be. Rome has "seven essentials to salvation," Brother Roberts five and several "&c." But with me the question is how many has Christ and his apostles? How many has the bible? After reading it many years, and I think somewhat carefully, I am prepared to say, I have never found it stated in the bible, that a single one of the important duties named by brother Roberts is "essential to man's salvation." I must assume that the word "essential" is used in its absolute sense, as it is not qualified in any particular. Hence used to indicate that these specified duties. Each and all of them, are indispensible to human salvation. Now, if this is the sense in which it is used, I beg to say that Christ, his Apostles, and the Bible nowhere teaches, that any of them, much less the whole of them, is "essential to man's salvation," and million's have been, and millions more will be saved without any of them; and if so they are not "essential." As I understand my old fashioned Bible, it teaches but *one* thing, as "essential" to salvation, and no human being ever was, or ever will be saved without it. And that is "*purity*." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." This condition saves the whole infantile, and idiotic race without attending to, or participating in any of these important duties, and yet, even to the adult sinner but one of these duties is "essential" to purity, and that is "Faith," and this is essential because it is the only medium through which purity can be attained. True, the "Blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, cleanseth from all sin" and and this cleansing constitutes the Christian's "essential purity." but that "Blood" is only applied through faith. Peter tells us how Gentiles were saved in his day, and says it was by God, "Purifying their hearts by faith." So repentance and faith become previous conditions. Essential to the attainment of this state of salvation, *i. e. Purity*, Baptism, the supper, and all other duties are conditions by which that saved condition, Purity, is retained. These are all important auxilliaries to the attainment, and retention of purity. But purity alone is "essential to human salvation," For he, "Gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi." Hence, "Every man that hath this hope purifieth himself, even as he is pure," and those whom John saw before the throne, were those, "who had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb."

O! for that purity of heart and life which makes us meet for the Master's use. Those others are all important, this and this alone is "essential." Christ and his apostles laid great stress on the means of its attainments "Faith," because it was the only means to this end. So

"Es stehet geschrieben in Gottes wort."—LUTHER.

"It stands written in God's word," and he "that hath my word let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff *to the wheat, saith the Lord.*

"Whiskey is your greatest enemy," said a preacher to Jones.

"But," said Jones, "don't the Bible say we are to love our enemies."

"Oh, yes, Jones, but it don't say we are to swallow them."

From Lathrop, California.

Our protracted meeting at this place closed last night. We had sixteen meetings in all, including one for Scripture reading and one council meeting. Although our meeting did not result as we hoped it would, it was perhaps as successful as could reasonably have been expected under existing circumstances, At first the attendance was small, but it gradually increased until the close of the meeting; and the interest, too, seemed to increase in about the same proportion. There were no accessions to the church, but we enjoy a good hope that the seed sown will produce a copious harvest in the not very distant future.

Lathrop is a small railroad village and is the end of the first division of the Central and Southern Pacific railroads. Perhaps two-thirds of the men in the town are either railroaders or engaged in business that is influenced by the railway. On this account we met at half past seven o'clock in the evening, and devoted one-half hour to singing before the regular services. During a part of the meeting we had prayer meeting instead of merely singing. The prayer meetings were conducted by Elder J. P. Wolfe, who also led in singing and took an active part in the meeting throughout. Elder Geo. Wolfe attended nearly all the services and gave us much encouragement by his presence and good counsel. He is an old veteran of the cross, who long ago put on the whole armor of God, whereby he has been able to successfully withstand the fiery darts of the wicked.

Among those from a distance may be mentioned sister Lizzie Dunlap, wife of brother J. H. Dunlap of Furlock, Stanislaus Co.; brother Samuel Stewart from San Francisco; sister Stull and her sons Robert and Joseph, who are both zealous young soldiers, and sister Lizzie Weimer, another faithful handmaiden of the Lord. These came from the Chapparral congregation, Calaveras county. Sister Stull is the first fruits of that church and one of its strongest pillars. Brother Walter Meyers and his helpmeet were also with us. Brother Walter is the founder of the Chaparral church, and is a workman who is capable of doing good work but at this time he seems to have laid down his oars. We hope that the time may soon come when he shall take them up again and ply them with his former earnestness and energy. Then brother Tommy Morgan, from Antioch was with us. This Antioch is in Contra Costa county, and in the bounds of the Marsh Creek church. Brother Tommy is one of our California singers. And in this paragraph I must not omit to state that on the night of the 10th instant, brother Christian Shank, of Lawrence Kansas, was with us. He and his consort have been in California about a year, visiting their son and daughter, the former of whom (brother Jacob) is a worthy deacon of this church. Having now completed their visit, they have gone to New Mexico, to spend the winter with their son John. This, I believe, completes the list of visitors.

The members of the California church, who were present, seemed to be somewhat revived and encouraged; but there was not as full an an attendance as was desired and expected. Our meeting was probably a little too early in the season, and we expect to have another by and by. On the 26th instant we intend to commence a meeting at Marsh Creek. Brethren, pray for the success of our common cause here in California.

J. W. BEER.

Oct. 13.

A Beautiful Thought.

When the summer of youth is slowly wasting awy on the nightfall of age, and the shadow of the past becomes deeper and deeper and life wears to its close, it is pleasant to look through the vista of time upon the sorrows and felicities of our earlier years. If we have a home to shelter, and hearts to rejoice with us, and friends have been gathered around our firesides, the rough places of wayfaring will have been worn away and smoothed away in the twilight of life, while the many dark spots we have passed through will grow brighter and more beautiful. Happy, indeed, are those whose intercourse with the world has not changed the tone of their holier feelings, or broken those musical chords of the heart, whose vibrations are so melodious, so tender and so touching in the evening of their life.